Mobilizing Undergraduates to Address the Social Determinants of Health in the Community: Year 1 of Health Leads at UMass Boston

Luciano Ramos  
*University of Massachusetts Boston, luciano.ramos@umb.edu*

Sherrod Williams  
*University of Massachusetts Boston, sherrod.williams@umb.edu*

Adrienne Wald  
*University of Massachusetts Boston, adrienne.wald@umb.edu*

Mark Marino  
*Health Leads*

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**Summary/Abstract**

Health Leads, a national non-profit organization, currently operates in six cities. Following successful partnerships with Harvard University and Boston University, Health Leads Boston initiated a partnership with UMass Boston in the Fall of 2012 to mobilize undergraduate students in addressing the social determinants of health for patients at Codman Square Health Center (CSHC).

16 undergraduates at UMass Boston were selected into the Health Leads program at CSHC, joining 17 students from Harvard and 4 students from BU. In 6 months, Health Leads at CSHC served 337 families, with students reporting positive experiences. Further expansion of Health Leads at UMB is planned with efforts focused on integrating the program on campus.

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**Approaches and Methods**

Expanding CSHC’s Capacity to Improve Clinical Efficiency and Patient Health Outcomes

1. **Rigorous and selective recruitment and selection process in partnership with UMB faculty and staff**
2. **Intensive sixteen (16) hours of pre-service training and ongoing supervision in clinic by trained professionals**
3. **Weekly competency-based trainings and biannual refresher trainings**
4. **Individualized, mid-semester, performance evaluations of work with clients**
5. **Alumni networking, support, and engagement**

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**Results/Impact**

Clinic/Client Impact (Oct. 2012 – March 2013)

- Families Served – 337
- Children and Adult Patients – 1,078

UMB Health Leads Volunteer Data

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<th>Applied</th>
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<th>Gender</th>
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</table>

Impact of UMB Student Volunteers

- 1,204 total volunteers hours (6hrs/week)
- 83% of volunteers report feeling adequately trained
- 92% of volunteers report satisfaction with the program (Fall Semester only)
- 81% volunteer retention rate

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**Conclusion/Next Steps**

Impact of UMB Student Volunteers

Health Leads at UMass Boston offers a promising model that provides a valuable service to the health center, needed resources to patients, and a rewarding experience for students.

To expand the reach and impact of this model, Health Leads aims to explore ways to also integrate this experience within the academic curriculum of the college by offering course credit, service-learning, internships and other opportunities for both students and faculty, in addition to continuing volunteer opportunities.

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**Additional Information**

For more information on Health Leads, please go to [www.healthleadsusa.org](http://www.healthleadsusa.org).

Funding for Health Leads operations at CSHC is provided by CSHC and [The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](http://www.rwjf.org).